

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES – DRAFT
November 12, 2008

Chair Knox White called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:35 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL** – Roll was called and the following recorded.

Members Present:

John Knox White
Michael Krueger
Jane Lee
Kathy Moehring

Members Absent:

Robert McFarland
Eric Schatmeier
Srikant Subramaniam

Staff Present:

Obaid Khan, Supervising Civil Engineer
Barry Bergman, Transportation Coordinator
Lt. David Boersma, Alameda Police Department

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. October 22, 2008

These minutes will be considered at the December 10, 2009, meeting.

3. **AGENDA CHANGES**

There were none.

4. **COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

Chair Knox White wished to discuss the traffic light at Park and Blanding at 8 a.m. on Friday morning. He noted that it was red in all directions for three to five seconds, and changed from green on Park to green on Blanding. He added that at the light at Santa Clara and High the City had previously had added one second to the red, but that it was not there now.

Chair Knox White inquired about the establishment of a transit plan subcommittee. *Staff Khan* replied that staff was concerned about the resources needed to implement that request, and suggested revisiting the request in December.

Chair Knox White requested that on future agendas, items brought for content be agendized for action as well. *Staff Khan* noted that staff would look into that request.

Chair Knox White noted that the question was raised at the Alameda Reuse and Redevelopment Authority (ARRA) meeting whether comments represented consensus or

the opinions of individuals.

a. Pedestrian Plan Task Force

There was no report.

b. Bicycle Plan Update Group

There was no report.

c. Alameda Point Advisory Task Force

There was no report.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

a. Monitoring of Oak Street and Central Avenue Intersection

Staff Khan summarized the extensive staff report and detailed the background and scope of this item. He described the monitoring plan, and added that Public Works and Alameda Police Department (APD) coordinated the work with the community groups, addressing their concerns. In response to a request by APD, City Council approved the change to the Municipal Code on June 17, 2008 regarding the use of the garage by skaters and skateboarders.

In response to an inquiry by *Commissioner Moehring* about additional bike racks in the area, *Staff Bergman* replied that there was not a current proposal for anything on the north side of Central near the theater. *Staff Khan* added that staff would continue to examine that issue, and that racks would be installed in Lot C.

Commissioner Krueger noted that page 4 stated that there was a pedestrian crossing time of 4 to 7 seconds, and inquired why there was a maximum walk time. As a pedestrian, he expected that the flashing hand time should be equal to the crossing distance divided by the average walking speed, and that the green signal should last through the crossing time. He would like to see the crossing time maximized.

Staff Khan replied that based upon the studies, 7 seconds at a signalized intersection was the maximum to coordinate with the cycle.

Commissioner Krueger inquired whether it would be possible to have a white hand and countdown that changed to an orange flashing countdown as the crossing time ran out.

Staff Khan stated that a \$50 parking permit was being considered for Monday through Friday parking. Staff would consider the PSBA request to increase the parking time from four to eight hours.

In response to an inquiry by *Commissioner Krueger* whether the truck that hit the

marquee would affect the bulbout design, *Staff Khan* replied it would, but that the bulbout could not be extended to the alley because of the need for the commercial loading zone.

In response to an inquiry by *Chair Knox White* whether peak commute hour traffic was measured, as opposed to peak use of the theater, *Staff Khan* replied that commute traffic was higher than traffic associated with the theater.

Chair Knox White stated that the intersection of Oak and Central was identified as a problem in the negative declaration for the theater project. *Staff Khan* responded that changes were made to the signal timing at that location in conjunction with the opening of the theater to address those concerns.

Chair Knox White requested that the staff report be clarified, as it appears to state that right turns from Central onto Oak were excluded from the analysis.

Chair Knox White expressed concern about the bike and pedestrian right-of-way violations, and noted they were not mentioned in the report. He noted that he witnessed the violations frequently, and that many people double-parked in the bike lane.

Lt. Boersma noted that double-parking data was collected by the Finance Department, and that the data could not be obtained.

In response to an inquiry by *Chair Knox-White* whether the tree that was removed would be installed on the bulbout, *Staff Khan* replied that staff would look into that, and added that it may also be installed in Lot C.

Open public hearing.

Lucy Gigli noted that she was disappointed when she saw the flier that the City distributed regarding bicyclist and pedestrian safety. She noted that when this item went to the City Council, the Transportation Commission wrote a letter regarding its concerns with the right turn lane, and she was disappointed that she did not see any analysis of how it all worked. She noted that with respect to the bulbouts, which she generally favored, she did not completely understand the argument for having them, as the number of jaywalkers did not appear to be very high. She asked if any reports were available regarding use of the parking structure. She noted that if bike parking were installed in Lot C, the bulbout would help bring it closer and link it to the theater.

Staff Khan replied that the parking structure was underutilized at this time, and staff was exploring the possibility of reducing the parking requirements for area businesses.

Ms. Gigli inquired whether the study would look at removing on-street parking to reclaim the space instead of increasing prices. *Staff Khan* replied that this would not be feasible as there was free parking in the residential neighborhoods.

Close public comment.

Commissioner Krueger expressed concern about the traffic backup on the intersection at Park Street, which he assumed was based on the traffic predictions. He inquired whether the traffic volume was sufficient to justify the queuing.

Staff Khan replied that staff did not see the traffic buildup when looking at the numbers.

Commissioner Moehring noted that she would like to see bike parking in front of the theater.

Chair Knox White agreed with that suggestion. He noted that bike parking in the garage was relocated without any input. The volumes were lower, and the long dropoff wasn't needed. He would like to see something in the City Council report about illegal use of the bike lanes for passing. He would also like to see bike parking in front of the theater.

Staff Khan noted that the bulbout also helped by providing spaces for patron queuing at the theater.

Commissioner Lee expressed concern about the \$150,000 cost, and commended staff on the brochure, which could be modified and used for schools.

Staff Khan said that staff could email her a copy of the file if the schools were interested in reproducing and distributing additional copies.

Commissioner Moehring suggested sending it out through the Alameda Educational Foundation.

Commissioner Krueger suggested that the City Council report mention how the bulbout will help with patron queuing and protection of the marquee. He believed the bike parking should be as close as possible to the theater entrance.

No action was taken.

b. Transportation Element Update Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR)

Staff Khan presented the staff report, and requested comments on the analysis, as well as the content of the Transportation Element. He noted that with respect to the flexibility of the Transportation Element, the guiding policies would go to the decision-makers who would make the final decisions based on specific conditions. He noted that the Transportation Element was a policy document, and was a program level analysis. Project level Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) would address more specific issues, and the staff recommendations attempted to provide the City Council with some discretion in dealing with them. He noted that secondary impacts could result from the increased traffic congestion resulting from the proposed policies, such as increased cut-through traffic and negatively affecting the City's ability to implement transportation system management strategies. With respect to the concerns about CMA funding, staff recommended changes to the proposed language in policies EIR-1, EIR-2, and EIR-6.

Commissioner Krueger inquired whether trip reduction related to transportation demand management (TDM) was considered in the analysis, or whether it did not reduce the trips sufficiently. *Staff Khan* replied that the anticipated reductions were not sufficient to mitigate the congestion resulting from the proposed policies, and that this analysis was conducted in response to the comments that had been received.

Commissioner Krueger suggested that that language be clarified.

With respect to flexibility, *Commissioner Krueger* inquired whether the policy as written could be overridden. *Staff Khan* replied that the General Plan would have to be changed. *Commissioner Krueger* inquired whether a Specific Plan could override the General Plan. *Staff Khan* replied that a Specific Plan must be consistent with the General Plan.

Chair Knox White noted that the City Council has already accepted the EIR policies, and that the EIR does not approve or deny a project, it just describes the impacts. He believed that the proposed language for EIR-1 and EIR-2 essentially made their intent meaningless. He added that the CMA had never withheld gas taxes for deficiency issues. He noted AC Transit's comment C-4 about bikes and transit mixing relatively well. He suggested adding clarification that the primary and secondary transit street classification did not have to do with current or anticipated service levels, but how the streets were treated. He noted that the EIR policy allows a queue jump on secondary streets.

Open public comment.

Chair Knox White responded to a letter submitted from *Ani Dimusheva*. The letter expressed concern that the City would be instituting measures to force traffic toward particular streets. *Chair Knox White* noted that other than transitional streets, the Transportation Element does not propose change in the use of the streets. The letter also described the treatments employed on Fernside Blvd. and compared conditions to Grand Street. *Chair Knox White* noted that the speeds on Fernside and Grand were found to be similar.

Close public comment.

Chair Knox White requested that two clarifications be added to the draft Transportation Element:

1. A description of how the overlay maps for the functional classification system should be used regarding:
 - Classification layer – should describe the expected overall use of the street
 - Land use layer – should describe the interaction between the roadway and the surrounding area
 - Modal layer – should indicate the priority of specific modes
2. The EIR policies should be renumbered and listed under the implementation strategies in section 4.4.2.

Transportation demand management (TDM) does not have to focus solely on trips generated by the project. For example, the bus rapid transit (BRT) proposed by SunCal for Alameda Point will largely serve other sections of the island.

The TC had recommended that Mariner Square Drive include only two traffic lanes, not four.

Chair Knox-White noted that he liked staff's proposed change to policy EIR-7 .

Commissioner Krueger noted that he was concerned about the proposed changes, as completed projects do not always uphold what was stated in the General Plan.

Staff Khan noted that if these policies had been in place previously, that elements from some project that the TC has object to could not have been constructed. For example, Atlantic would have a 25 mph speed limit, and there would be no soundwall.

Commissioner Krueger moved to accept the three clarifications. *Commissioner Moehring* seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Commissioner Krueger moved to accept staff's recommendation regarding the proposed modifications of selected street classifications. *Commissioner Moehring* seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Commissioner Krueger moved to accept staff's proposed changes regarding policy EIR-7. *Commissioner Moehring* seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Commissioner Moehring moved to accept staff's changes regarding policies EIR-1, EIR-2 and EIR-6. There was no second.

Commissioner Moehring moved to accept policy EIR-1 as written, and policy EIR-2 with the addition of exceptions for the addition of transit-exclusive or nonmotorized vehicle lanes. *Commissioner Lee* seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Chair Knox-White invited a motion to extend the meeting to 11:00 p.m.

Commissioner Krueger moved to extend the meeting to 11:00 p.m. *Commissioner Moehring* seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Commissioner Krueger moved to recommend adoption of the Transportation Element with the previously stated changes. *Commissioner Moehring* seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Commissioner Krueger expressed concern about induced traffic, and wished to clarify the meaning of "environmentally superior" in the language of the EIR.

Commissioner Krueger moved to recommend approval of the EIR, with comments, with the provision that the environmentally superior alternative does not include the phenomenon of induced traffic, and does not include analysis of all the environmental effects, particularly emissions in reaching the conclusion of “environmentally superior,” and only looks at the City’s adopted significant criteria. *Commissioner Moehring* seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

c. Thresholds of Significance Scope of Work and Schedule

Open public comment.

There was none.

Close public comment.

Chair Knox-White noted that Phase I should be completed by March 2009, and would like it to become a priority.

No action was taken.

7. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

a. Estuary Crossing Feasibility Study

Staff Khan noted the study was expected to be completed in early 2009, and that the draft of the study would be presented to the Transportation Commission first.

b. Broadway/Jackson Update

Staff Khan noted that the project study report (PSR) was submitted to Caltrans, and added that they did not have the funds available to review it. He noted that ACTIA was hiring a consultant for the study report.

Staff Khan noted that the Pedestrian Plan would go to City Council in January 2009, and that ACTIA had indicated that it would regard the City as meeting its project deadline if the Planning Board approves the Transportation Element in November.

c. Monitoring of Oak Street/Central Avenue intersection

Staff Khan noted that there was no report.

d. Upcoming development-related traffic studies and plans

Staff Khan noted that there was no report.

e. **Future meeting agenda items**

ADJOURN: 10:50 p.m.

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